

VZCZCXYZ0004
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #0943/01 1820912
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 300912Z JUN 08
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9363
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 8404
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 9633

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 000943

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS; ANTI-HUMAN
TRAFFICKING EFFORTS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage June 28-30 on the government's effort and incentives to boost the economy and revitalize the stock market; on the kickoff of limited conversion between the New Taiwan dollar and the Chinese Yuan (Renminbi); and on the preparation of the local tourist industry and airports before the arrival of mainland Chinese tourists. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" continued criticizing the Ma Ying-jeou Administration's policy of leaning toward China, featuring a banner headline on page four of its June 28 report saying that "U.S. Scholar Sutter Warned the Ma Administration Publicly that the U.S. Might Sacrifice Taiwan if Taiwan Leans Toward China."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the "Liberty Times," echoing Professor Robert Sutter's recent remarks and noting a Chinese military exercise held at a civilian airport, blamed the Ma Administration's cross-Straits policy for compromising Taiwan's national security. An editorial in the pro-unification "United Daily News" noted Chinese President Hu Jintao's skill in managing cross-Straits relations. Former AIT Chairman Nat Bellocchi opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" that the Ma Administration has not been to state clearly what it wants for Taiwan, while the people of Taiwan have the right to know. An editorial in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said that expanding Taiwan's international space relies on mutual trust across the Straits. Another editorial in the "China Post" expressed its support in a new law to combat the problem of human trafficking in Taiwan. End summary.

¶3. Cross-Straits Relations

A) "The Purpose of China's Military Exercise Involving the Civilian Aircraft is All Too Clear"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] editorialized (6/30):

"On the eve of launching the direct charter flights across the Straits on July 4, the Chinese media reported that the Chinese military and the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) jointly conducted a first-ever 'parachute exercise for urgent need' at Shijiazhuang Zhengding International Airport in Hubei Province on June 18. The exercise, which involved eight civilian aircraft, practiced transporting special forces and the operations of the special forces to gain control of an airport. China's netizens even commented that 'the return of Taiwan is coming.'

"At the same time, Professor Robert Sutter at Georgetown University, who once worked at the Central Intelligence Agency, made a public warning recently that Taiwan is in a weak position in between the two strong powers of China and the United States. Taiwan has to be clear about the fundamental interests of the United States. If [Taiwan's] Ma Ying-jeou Administration turns its back to the United States and walks with China, the United States does not rule out the possibility of sacrificing Taiwan and reaching a deal with Beijing

directly on the Taiwan issue. ...

"In a word, the Ma Administration's general roadmap of governance is to tilt in favor of China and follow China's orders. Ma has never changed his claim of 'ultimate unification.' The Ma Administration could not wait to propose the [policy of launching] direct charter flights, opening Taiwan to Chinese tourists and lifting regulations on financial exchanges across the Strait after assuming office. However, the stock market still nosedived by 1,800 points, which demonstrates that Ma's policy of leaning toward China is not working at all. In addition, in terms of foreign affairs, Ma imposes self-restrictions by 'putting a heavier emphasis on cross-Strait policy than on diplomacy.' In terms of arms procurement, [Ma] suspended the deal in order to fawn on China. Professor Sutter's outspokenness has expressed the concerns of our important friends such as the United States and Japan. In general, if the Ma Administration continues walking on the current path, Taiwan will not only see its economy collapse and military strength shrink, but it will also be more isolated in the international community and probably have to wait for China's takeover."

B) "Interpreting Hu Jintao's Skill in Managing Cross-Strait Relations"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (6/28):

"[Chinese President] Hu Jintao's thinking and skill seem to have jumped out of Chinese Communist leaders' tradition and patterns in the past. For Taiwan, this is mixed with advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that there is progress and immediate results in cross-Strait interaction; the disadvantage is that the initiative tilts toward China. ...

TRAFFICKING EFFORTS

"Hu's skill in managing cross-Strait relations is revealed in two aspects. First, Hu cares about the main body instead of the trivia. For example, [Taiwan's President] Ma Ying-jeou accused [Chinese Premier] Wen Jiabao of [being] 'arrogant and foolish' [during the Tibetan uprising in March 2008], and Ma's appointment of Lai Shin-yuan as Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Chairperson made the Chinese Communists upset and hesititant [about Ma]. It is reported that the reason [KMT Chairman] Wu Poh-hsiung suddenly accepted the invitation and visited China was because of Lai's appointment. Hu definitely has seen these disturbances in Taiwan's political circles after the Ma Administration assumed office. Hu actually could have thrown stones at Ma, who has fallen into a well [suggesting hitting Ma when Ma was down]. However, Hu avoided these trivia and endorsed Ma's policy of 'launching direct flights on July 4.' Hu not only became a player in Taiwan's political circles, but he also had dialogue with the Taiwan people directly, which did not necessarily give face to Ma.

"Second is the revision to 'unilateralism,' which is an important signal showing Hu's differences from his predecessors. In the meeting between Hu and [Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation Chairman] Chiang [Pin-kun] on June 13, Hu proposed a sixteen-word principle for cross-Strait negotiations, which is 'conducting negotiation based on equality, communicating based on goodwill, accumulating consensus, and making progress with pragmatism.' Hu also clarified that conducting negotiation based on equality means 'not to impose its own wishful thinking on the other side.' The word might suggest that Taiwan 'not impose its own wishful thinking' on the Mainland. However, it also sounds as if the mainland 'will not impose its own wishful thinking' on Taiwan. Hu also said that [one side] 'must understand the other side out of the goodwill;' and 'has to seek a resolution pragmatically that both sides accept.' All these reveal revisions to 'unilateralism.' If there is any falsehood in Hu's thinking and skill, then Hu is Machiavellian. If there is genuineness [in Hu's thinking and skill] then, indeed, Hu is a statesman. ..."

C) "Keeping the Taiwanese Informed"

Former AIT Chairman Nat Bellocchi opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (6/29):

"... Neither side wants to raise sensitive issues in discussions, and ambiguity will continue to prevail. So how will the people of Taiwan - a full democracy whose people have the right to know what its government is doing - be assured that their fundamental rights are being protected? This is a delicate and difficult task, and it falls to the president and his administration to meet both sides' expectations. ...

"The problem is that signing a 'comprehensive economic cooperation pact' with China without agreeing on fundamental issues such as political matters could be dangerous. The Ma Ying-jeou administration has yet to state clearly what it wants for Taiwan. This is becoming clearer to China and the US, as it is to the Taiwanese public. ...

"There is an interest in maintaining the status quo - protecting the country's democracy is part of this - and in bolstering economic growth. Yet the names 'Taiwan' and 'Taiwanese,' the issue of sovereignty, and for many eventual de jure independence, remain in the wings.

"Establishing a broad pact with China on a number of issues could easily generate problems with many smaller issues in which meaning is clouded by ambiguity.

"Taiwan should continue pursuing a constructive relationship with China, of course, but the results should be acceptable to Taiwanese."

D) "Taiwan's International Space Is a Long Shot"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (6/28):

"... If [Chinese President] Hu Jintao means what he says, Taiwan's international space will be expanded at no expense to Beijing. It will be a win-win situation, which Hu says he is seeking.

"But here is the catch. There is no mutual trust. It has been destroyed completely by two decades of confrontational politics under Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian. Ma Ying-jeou's presidency is barely six weeks old. He will have to do more to win Beijing's trust and 'goodwill.'

"In the long run, the prospects for Taiwan's greater international
TRAFFICKING EFFORTS

space are good if mutual trust can be rebuilt. The optimism is based on the fact that both sides are determined to seek a win-win situation after experiencing a painful period of hostility that was in the interests of neither side."

4. Human Trafficking

"... Trafficking Legislation Should Punish Smugglers"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (6/29):

"We fully support the proposal for having a special Anti-Human Trafficking Law, and hope to see our legislators come up with a comprehensive bill that can finally address this growing problem.
...

"For such a law to be effective, provisions must be drafted that impose stiff punishments for people convicted of smuggling or exploiting illegal immigrants. ...

"The new anti-trafficking law should impose stiff punishments for passport and ID card fraud and increase the budget for police and judicial cooperation with other countries, especially the United States, Canada, Australia and European Union members. ...

"In addition, budget money should be allocated to promote increased cooperation between law enforcement authorities in Taiwan and counterparts in mainland China, such as sharing intelligence on human smuggling operations by means of our Straits Exchange Foundation and mainland China's Association for Relations Across the

Taiwan Strait. ..."

YOUNG